

UNITED STATES EMBASSY  
ART IN EMBASSIES EXHIBITION  
ADDIS ABABA



## ADAMSEGED MICHAEL

**Ladies in White Robes**, 2000

*Oil on canvas, 33 1/16 x 44 7/8 in. (84 x 114 cm).*

*Courtesy of the artist and the School of Fine Arts & Design,  
Addis Ababa University, Ethiopia*

# ART IN EMBASSIES



Established in 1963, the U.S. Department of State's office of ART in Embassies (ART) plays a vital role in our nation's public diplomacy through a culturally expansive mission, creating temporary and permanent exhibitions, artist programming, and publications. The Museum of Modern Art first envisioned this global visual arts program a decade earlier. In the early 1960s, President John F. Kennedy formalized it, naming the program's first director. Now with over 200 venues, ART curates temporary and permanent exhibitions for the representational spaces of all U.S. chanceries, consulates, and embassy residences worldwide, selecting and commissioning contemporary art from the U.S. and the host countries. These exhibitions provide international audiences with a sense of the quality, scope, and diversity of both countries' art and culture, establishing ART's presence in more countries than any other U.S. foundation or arts organization.

ART's exhibitions allow foreign citizens, many of whom might never travel to the United States, to personally experience the depth and breadth of our artistic heritage and values, making what has been called a: "footprint that can be left where people have no opportunity to see American art."

*For fifty years, ART in Embassies has played an active diplomatic role by creating meaningful cultural exchange through the visual arts. The exhibitions, permanent collections and artist exchanges connect people from the farthest corners of an international community. Extending our reach, amplifying our voice, and demonstrating our inclusiveness are strategic imperatives for America. ART in Embassies cultivates relationships that transcend boundaries, building trust, mutual respect and understanding among peoples. It is a fulcrum of America's global leadership as we continue to work for freedom, human rights and peace around the world.*

*John Forbes Kerry  
U.S. Secretary of State*

# INTRODUCTION

I am delighted to introduce the American and Ethiopian artworks displayed in the U.S. Embassy's Chief of Mission Residence in Addis Ababa. While several works exhibited here are from my private collection, the other works represented come from the State Department's Art in Embassies program, which makes it possible for ambassadors to have culturally diverse art exhibitions curated in their residences.

Ethiopia is often called the “Cradle of Humanity.” Throughout my travels in-country, I have witnessed firsthand the fascinating paleo-anthropological and historical evidence, including the ancestral mother of mankind “Lucy,” originally found in the Great Rift Valley and the historical rock-hewn churches in Lalibela. Along these lines, creation and religion are themes that reverberate throughout this exhibition. Andargé Asfaw's *The Tree of Life*, Dilip Sheth's *Road to Lalibela*, Haben Habte-Tsion's *Timket (Epiphany)*, Asnake Melese's *My Dream*, and Dereje Demissie's *Tsebel (Holy Water)* depict the beauty, diversity, and richness of religion, and culture of this nation where humanity began.

Creation is again reflected in American artist Máye Torres' god-like figure *Samba Pa' Ti* and the landscape of Margaret Yamamoto – wife of former Ambassador Don Yamamoto – that depicts Lake Langano near Ethiopia's ancient Great Rift Valley. I am proud to note that Ruth Gowell's *Study in Black and White – Red* and Sofia Kifle's *The House of Silence* add to the strong presence of women artists in this exhibition.

This exhibition illustrates our close relationship with Ethiopian artists and our ongoing collaboration with Ethiopian art institutions, including Addis Ababa University's School of Art and Design, which loaned works to the Embassy Residence for display. I am encouraged by the generosity with which our two nations share artworks essential to our mutual understanding. To Art in Embassies and to the Ethiopian artists who contributed to this impressive exhibition, a very heartfelt thank-you.

**Ambassador Patricia M. Haslach**

*Addis Ababa  
July 2014*

# ANDARGÉ ASFAW 1956

“There is a story behind every image that I capture. When I look into the eyes of someone in one of my photographs, I am captivated by their presence. In my landscapes, I seek the wisdom of the past. Leaves, a cave, a pile of stones, all represent the soul of a place. The colors and mood of light are a constant source of inspiration. I translate my images into printed work using all different types of media, including fabric. My background in alternative photographic processes, such as platinum, palladium, and cyanotype has expanded the way I look at photographs. I use various cameras in my work. A large format camera is irreplaceable.”

A graduate of the Hallmark Institute of Photography, Andargé Asfaw is an internationally recognized photographer, educator, and author. Born in Addis Ababa, Asfaw has maintained a photography studio, F/STOP STUDIO, in Washington, D.C. for over twenty-five years, and offers photo safaris to Ethiopia in

partnership with Ethiopian Airlines. He is the first Ethiopian photographer to publish a photography book about Ethiopia *Ethiopia from the Heart* (2007); the book aims to raise awareness about Ethiopia’s environmental crisis and to fund tree-planting projects in his home country. In 2009, Asfaw and a team of creative professionals formed Canopy Ethiopia. The organization’s mission is to implement programs for environmental sustainability, to educate citizens in environmental stewardship, to promote grassroots community development, and to fundraise for tree planting in depleted regions of Ethiopia, one village at a time. Asfaw’s work is held in many museum and private collections, and has appeared in several prominent international publications including in *African Business*, *American Enterprise*, *Esquire*, *The New Republic*, *Newsweek*, *Space News*, *Vanity Fair*, and *The Washington Post*, among others.

[www.fstopstudio.com](http://www.fstopstudio.com)

# ANDARGÉ ASFAW



**Tree of Life: Gondar Market**, 1994. *Color photograph, 26 x 37 in. (66 x 94 cm). Courtesy of the artist, Silver Spring, Maryland*

# DEREJE DEMISSIE 1982



“Nature is an infinite source of inspiration.”  
— Dereje Demissie

Dereje Demissie was born in Ethiopia in 1978, and is a graduate of Addis Ababa's School of Fine Arts and Design, who also studied with influential teacher Getahun Assefa. Demissie has exhibited widely in leading galleries in Ethiopia, Sudan, Germany, Uganda, the United States, and the United Arab Emirates. He is a founding member of the Nubia Art Studio. Inspired by nature, he builds a bridge to abstraction, emphasizing formal elements rendered in highly keyed, flickering colors, with the aim of almost mystical revelation.

[http://noniart.de/  
artist/dereje-demissie/](http://noniart.de/artist/dereje-demissie/)

[http://arefe.wordpress.  
com/2013/06/06/new-exhibition-  
to-open-at-lela-gallery/](http://arefe.wordpress.com/2013/06/06/new-exhibition-to-open-at-lela-gallery/)

**Tsebel**, 2002

*Oil on canvas, 74 <sup>13</sup>/<sub>16</sub> x 55 <sup>1</sup>/<sub>8</sub> in. (190 x 140 cm)*

*Courtesy of the artist and the School of Fine Arts & Design,  
Addis Ababa University, Ethiopia*

## RUTH GOWELL 1949

“My work is an exploration of color, reflection, texture, and pattern with color as the dominant force. My interest is in color that changes slowly across the surface of the warp. Blue evolves into lilac...a yellow center shades out to orange at the edges. The shifting hues are then ‘layered’ to create many options of color interaction within the weaving.”

Ruth Gowell has been weaving since her apprenticeship in Denmark in 1970. In 1978, she began exploring the possibilities of warp face weave with very fine rayon - a departure from the weft face weave of traditional tapestry. She works both in small scale (10" x 10") and on larger weavings. The small-scale weavings are done on a narrow warp (11" wide) and are nine yards long. Fifteen to twenty weavings are produced from each warp.

She dyes viscose rayon with fiber reactive dyes in color progressions; these progressions usually involve twenty or more colors between the two end colors. Each color shift becomes a layer of warp, and currently five layers of warp are used in each series of weavings. Often one of these layers will be a metallic yarn, and layers of black and white rayon are also common in her work. A workshop in fused glass in 1999 led to the purchase of a kiln, and an exploration of the technique of fused glass. An immediate love of iridized glass and the possibilities of pattern and texture have resulted in the development of platters and bowls, which continue her exploration of color interaction, color gradation, pattern, and texture. Gowell's work is in many corporate and museum collections and can be seen at a number of craft shows each year.

[www.ruthgowell.com](http://www.ruthgowell.com)

Next page:

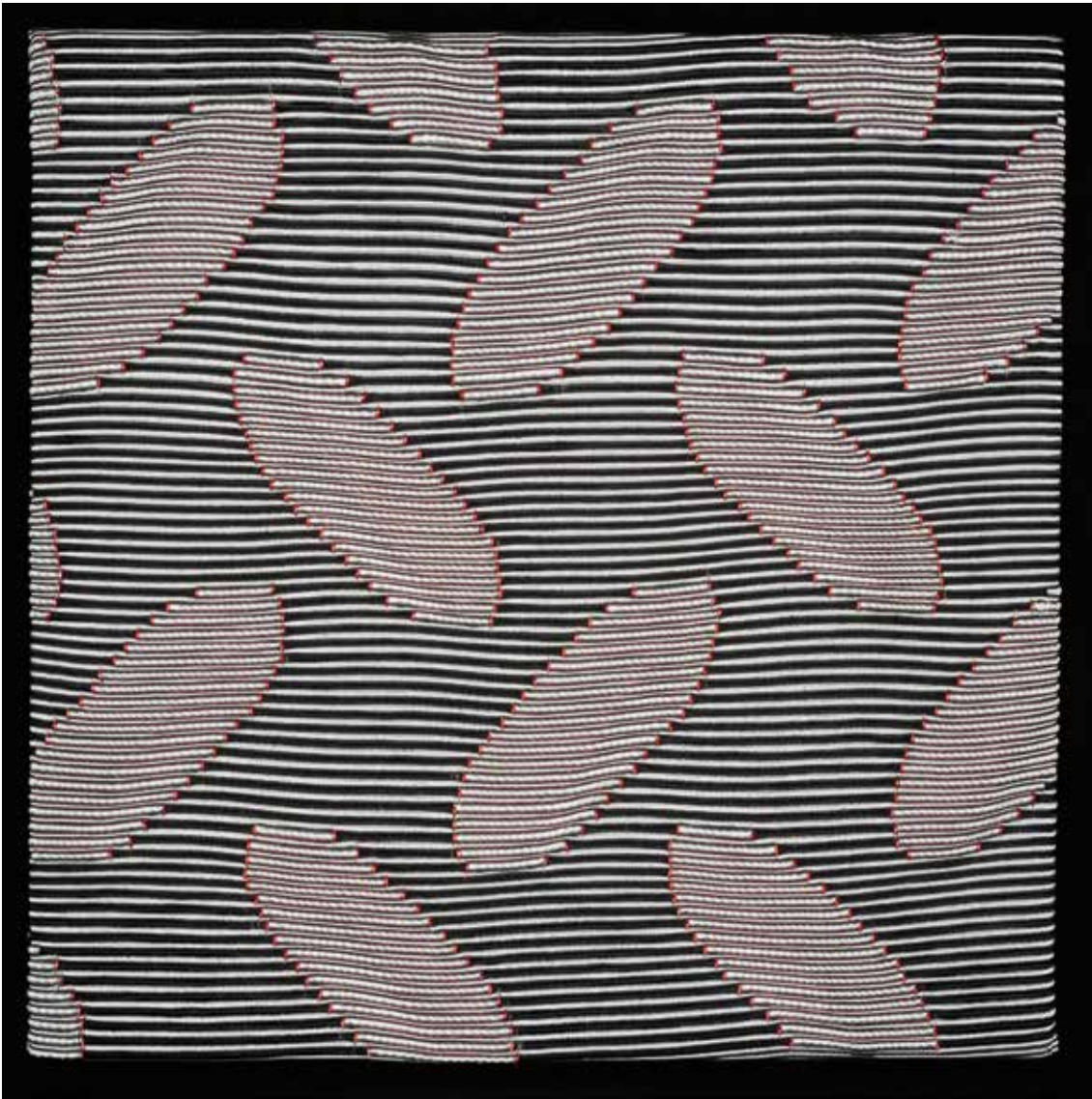
**Study in Black and White – Red**, 2011

*Woven, stuffed, beaded, and quilted fiber mounted on wooden stretchers*

*29 x 29 x 3 in. (73,7 x 73,7 x 7,6 cm)*

*Courtesy of the artist, Falls Church, Virginia*





# HABEN HABTE-TSION 1976

Haben Habte-Tsion is a painter in oils and watercolor who received his diploma from the Addis Ababa University, School of Fine Arts and Design in 1997. That same year he participated in a group exhibition at the School of Fine Arts and Design, and his work is in the collection of the University.

[www.the3rdman.com/  
ethiopianart/whoswho/h.html](http://www.the3rdman.com/ethiopianart/whoswho/h.html)

**Timket**, 1997  
*Oil on canvas, 52 ¾ x 100 13/16 in. (134 x 256,1 cm)*  
*Courtesy of the artist and the School of Fine Arts  
& Design, Addis Ababa University, Ethiopia*





# TEWODROS HAGOS 1966

Tewodros Hagos was raised in Addis Ababa. After receiving his Bachelor of Fine Arts degree from the Addis Ababa University's School of Fine Arts in 1995, he left for Belgium in 1998, where he stayed for over ten years, living and working in Antwerp. Since his return to Addis Ababa, Hagos has managed to carve out a distinct artistic style, and is now regarded as one of the most promising Ethiopian painters of his

generation. He has had his work displayed at numerous solo exhibitions locally, as well as in countries such as Belgium, Germany, Italy, the United States, and the Netherlands. In 2013 he was the recipient of the first Ethiopia Creates Art Prize, sponsored jointly by the Little Ethiopia Cultural and Resource Center of Los Angeles, California, and local art galleries, and received a residency in Los Angeles, as well as the prize.

[www.guzomag.com/index.php?option=com\\_k2&view=item&id=72](http://www.guzomag.com/index.php?option=com_k2&view=item&id=72)

[www.tadias.com/02/20/2013/tewodros-hagos-winner-of-the-first-ethiopia-creates-art-prize](http://www.tadias.com/02/20/2013/tewodros-hagos-winner-of-the-first-ethiopia-creates-art-prize)

**Debre Damo**, 1987

*Oil on canvas, 42 1/8 x 155 1/8 in. (107 x 140 cm)*

*Courtesy of the artist and the School of Fine Arts & Design, Addis Ababa University, Ethiopia*





## SOFIA KIFLE 1958

“My everyday experience is like a dance in my mind that unfolds a form. That form, from one moment to another, becomes endless compositions. I reflect my roots, I reflect moments as they suggest to me. I am a storyteller in color and I am always ready with pregnant thoughts of moments, cultures and nature. I am vast concepts and ideas of human nature and behavior. I am thoughts that are about humanity. Thoughts of freedom, pain, struggle, life, humility, fate and thoughts of strength and love. My works visualize and portray my story, the stories of the Africans, the Americans, and the world. *The House of Silence* takes the historic revolution of Ethiopia in 1974 as its subject.

I stand intertwined with the suspended time and space, willingly listening and looping myself with symbols, myths, color, movement, shapes, rhythm and forms. The asymmetrical and primal method is the means for stitching and resolving the painting.

The primal route is by no means a defiance of the tradition. It is a departure. It is an existence that emerged from experiences ingrained in ceremonies.”

Born and raised in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, Sofia Kifle migrated to the United States in 1982, during the height of Ethiopia’s political turmoil, to avoid persecution by the military socialist regime then in power. Upon arrival, she decided to pursue a career in the arts, and enrolled in the Theater and Arts Management program at Mary Baldwin College in Staunton, Virginia. After graduation in 1987, she immersed herself in many disciplines within the creative world. In May 2000, she completed the Masters in Fine Art Program at Howard University, Washington, D.C., and has since exhibited her work in several group and solo exhibitions in Ethiopia and the United States.

[www.sofiakifle.com](http://www.sofiakifle.com)

**The House of Silence**, 1995  
*Acrylic on paper, 35 x 43 in. (88,9 x 109,2 cm)*  
Courtesy of the artist, Washington, D.C.



## ERMIAS KIFLEYESUS 1974

Ermias Kifleyesus, installation artist, trained in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, and London, England, now works in Belgium and England. He is planning, with some Ethiopian colleagues, to realize a project in the environs of Addis Ababa, and is also working on a project that may link up his contemporaries, nine Ethiopian artists working on a range of media, including film and video. Kifleyesus hopes to create

a “collective narrative based on the issue of foreign aid and what the new road means to them, and to Ethiopia.” The distinguishing qualification in these young and middle-aged artists’ works is their unreserved manifestations of African culture, plus their individual experience.

<http://ermiaskifleyesus.com>



**Life by Red Light,** 1997  
Oil on canvas,  
47 ½ x 31 ½ in. (120,7 x 80 cm)  
Courtesy of the artist and the  
School of Fine Arts & Design,  
Addis Ababa University,  
Ethiopia



# WOSENE WORKE KOSROF 1950

“For more than thirty years, I’ve used Amharic script as the core element in my paintings. As the first Ethiopian-born American artist to use this script – one of the few ancient written systems in Africa – I’m fascinated by the visual forms of language and what they can express in contemporary art.

Applying the symbols in my paintings, I relieve words of conventional meanings and, instead, explore their aesthetic, sensual, and visual content. Disassembled and recombined, elongated, distorted, or inverted, the language characters reveal not only innovative compositional elements, but also give new perspectives on our connection to language, on how we communicate and make meaning.

We seldom ‘read’ script as a language and are taught, rather, to identify and respond to letters as words. Working with individual letters on canvas, I get to see them as both familiar and strange: familiar – because I know literal meanings they carry when combined; yet, strange, because I ‘see’ how the letters standing alone or in non-word combinations present unaccustomed meanings. Filled with colors or in black and white, these symbols arouse new feelings, conjure up memories, create musical sounds, and at times even seem to emit fragrances and flavors. These new ‘Word Plays’ force me to question my habits of seeing and to become more ‘visually fluent.’

Working in unconventional ways with language also affects my painting process. Since I don’t pre-sketch paintings and rather have only a vague outline in my mind of what a composition will become, with each painting I have to step back from the habits of mind of how I know and see the language. I ‘dialogue’ with the symbols as they emerge, working them up with colors and layering them with wet and dried acrylic paint. The canvas becomes an ‘enlivened space’ with texture and depth, and the language symbols often surprise me with their unexpected transformations. My painting process is an intense interplay of intention and accident, curiosity and discovery.”

Wosene Worke Kosrof uses the aesthetic potential of Amharic as the major compositional element in his paintings. Calligraphic forms are broken apart, abstracted, and reconfigured to create a new visual language. His compositions draw upon his Ethiopian heritage while incorporating his experiences as an expatriate living in the U.S. He earned a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree from the Addis Ababa Fine Arts School and a Master of Fine Arts degree from Howard University in Washington, D.C. He has had solo and group exhibitions in the U.S., the U.K., Europe, and Africa.

<https://wosene.com>



**Meskel**, 1968

*Oil on canvas,*

*31 ½ x 23 ¾ in. (80 x 60 cm)*

*Courtesy of the artist and the  
School of Fine Arts & Design,  
Addis Ababa University, Ethiopia*

# ASNAKE MELESE



**My Dream**, 1994. Oil on canvas, 24  $\frac{7}{16}$  x 37  $\frac{3}{8}$  in. (62.1 x 94.9 cm). Courtesy of the artist and the School of Fine Arts & Design, Addis Ababa University, Ethiopia

# ADAMSEGED MICHAEL 1967

Adamseged Michael was born in Addis Ababa and studied visual art at Addis Ababa University, Ale School of Fine Arts & Design and graduated with a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree with distinction in 2008. Currently he is working at the Sandford International School as an art instructor and also teaching fashion design at Zewditu fashion design school, as well as maintaining his own graphic design shop. Adamseged has shown his art works at several places in group and solo exhibitions. His works depict a variety of subject matter such as women, market places, religious figures, landscapes, animals and the concept of his compositions

is to interpret the movement of life and to show changing moments. Shape is his main visual language to express this concept.

[www.adamseged.com](http://www.adamseged.com)



**Ladies in White Robes**, 2000. Oil on canvas, 33 1/16 x 44 7/8 in. (84 x 114 cm).  
Courtesy of the artist and the School of Fine Arts & Design, Addis Ababa University, Ethiopia

## AMARE SELFU 1980

Amare Selfu is an accomplished artist and art instructor working and teaching at the Addis Ababa University's School of Fine Arts. He has been featured in exhibitions in Ethiopia and abroad, including a solo show at the National Museum of Ethiopia. The exhibition titled *En Gulf* offered a varied selection of vibrant, color-drenched works, capturing the nuances of social interaction, urban life and landscapes. Selfu's impressionistic paintings capture movement, color, and passion and produce an immediate emotional reaction.

Grief-stricken people gripped by powerful forces inhabit almost every canvas. Though trapped in day-to-day challenges, the subjects seem to possess the strength and courage to fight on against all odds. Static movement is uniquely portrayed in the work through his brushstroke, use of light and sumptuous, bright color. Using very bright color, the artist seems to create balance and harmony in the world which at times seemed dim and despairing. As he explains it, the artist constantly struggles to find meaning in his work. "The process of the making always seems to be more important than the final product," he says. The act of making the painting is, for him, an emotional response to a subject and a process of solving visual equations between shapes. One of his paintings, *The Anger Land*, is composed of images of deracination, and the loss and abuse of nature. The literal eating-away of our world seems to be a metaphor for ideas of threat and decay. The subject matter, point of view, light, and psychological tension are all elements common to many of his works.

<http://arefe.wordpress.com/2011/10/09/amare-selfu/>





**Cafe Workers**, 1996. Oil on canvas, 39  $\frac{3}{8}$  x 78  $\frac{3}{4}$  in. (100 x 200 cm). Courtesy of the artist and the School of Fine Arts & Design, Addis Ababa University, Ethiopia

## DILIP SHETH 1956

“An undefined energy inspires me to go along this creative process and my figures move from abstract to surrealistic to realistic forms, breathing between layers of colors and details of drawing. My work moves and yearns for unity within its own contrasts, and when it achieves unity it brings about tranquility and joy. Through the use of bold colors, the real world I see becomes my world on canvas.”

Born and raised in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, Dilip Sheth is an Ethiopian American who immigrated to the United States in 1980. He discovered his interest and talent in painting late in life while working in a local art gallery in the early 1990s. To further his knowledge of the art world, he started taking art classes at the Corcoran School of Art in Washington, D.C., and eventually took up art as his career. Sheth is a brilliant colorist who expresses the quaint, subtle beauty of ordinary moments and natural scenes in a way that is bold, intense, and dramatic. Over the course of fifteen years, Sheth has participated in numerous solo and group shows in the United States, including the New York Art Expo, and his work can be found in several collections.

<http://dilip-sheth.artistwebsites.com>

Next page:

**Road to Lalibela**, 2011

*Acrylic on canvas*

*40 x 40 in. (101,6 x 101,6 cm)*

*Courtesy of the artist, Takoma Park, Maryland*





# MÁYE TORRES 1960

Máye Torres was born in Taos, New Mexico, in 1960. Nestled in the heart of the Sangre de Cristo Mountains, Taos is a small town steeped in the multilayered cultures of Native Americans, Old Spain, the inheritance of pioneering trappers, and the influence of more contemporary artists and businessmen. Torres's heritage is a blend of all these, and her art reflects this melting pot of diverse people.

When she was a child, her father was a rural science educator and the family lived in El Salvador, Ecuador, and Bolivia. There Torres was exposed to the lives of the Incan, Mayan, and Aztec people, their art and concepts of the universe. She was also immersed in Old Spanish and European cultures and their politics. When they returned to Taos in 1976, the town had become a major hub of the United States art world. In high school she often assisted sculptor Ted Egri in his studio and began exhibiting her own art.

Torres earned a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree from the University of New Mexico, with an emphasis on studio art and science. As a National Honors Exchange Scholar, during her junior year in college, she went to Humboldt State University in Northern California, where she focused on lost wax casting and ceramics. Subsequently, Torres apprenticed with painter John Wenger, and with Light and Space artist Larry Bell.

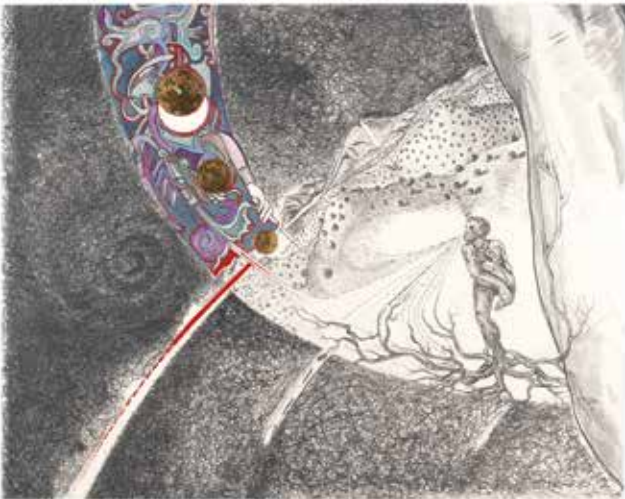
During the past thirty years, as a professional artist, she has made her art an exploration of global ideas from science to politics, mythology to social media, and cosmology to human emotion. Experimentation remains central to her process, as does the human form, which results in emotionally powerful artworks that turn her quest for universal and self-exploration back on the viewer. Torres is the mother of three sons, Isaiah, Zach, and Matthias. This drawing, *Samba Pa' Tí*, is a tribute to her love for her late husband, painter Rory Wagner.

[www.mayetorresart.com](http://www.mayetorresart.com)

**Samba Pa' Tí**, 2010

Acrylic paint and gold leaf mounted on board, 4 panels, each: 34 x 42 in. (86.4 x 106,7 cm)

Courtesy of the artist, Carson, New Mexico



## MARGARET D. YAMAMOTO 1956

“A beautiful moment captured forever from the shores of Lake Langano in the spring of 2009, this work is one of many watercolors inspired by the splendor of Ethiopia’s still pristine environment.”

Margaret Darling Yamamoto has been painting throughout her life in the Foreign Service, but more intensively during her time posted in Djibouti and Ethiopia. She studied with leading artists Peter Hamitsky, Timothy Clarke, and briefly with Leonard Gervitz at the Art Students League in New York City, and considers watercolor painting en plein air as the ideal she strives for in all of her work. Winslow Homer is her muse, and she has studied his watercolor works in the collection of the National Gallery in Washington, D.C. Yamamoto has exhibited her works in Djibouti, Ethiopia, and Washington, D.C.

**Sunset over Lake Langano, 2009**

Watercolor on paper, 16 ½ x 20 ½ in. (41,9 x 52,1 cm)

Courtesy of the artist, McLean, Virginia



# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

## **Washington, D.C.**

Sarah Tanguy, Curator  
Theresa Beall, Registrar  
Sally Mansfield, Editor  
Tabitha Brackens, Assistant Editor  
Amanda Brooks, Imaging Manager and Photographer

## **Addis Ababa**

Tahra Vose, Cultural Affairs Officer  
Kim Sanoussy, Assistant General Services Officer  
Katherine Diop, Information Officer  
Gary McElhiney, Acting Cultural Affairs Officer  
Learned Dees, Cultural Affairs Officer  
Yohannes Birhanu, Cultural Affairs Specialist

## **Vienna**

Nathalie Mayer, Graphic Designer





Published by ART in Embassies  
U.S. Department of State, Washington, D.C.  
October 2014